

TROPICAL CYCLONE 03B

Tropical Cyclone 03B, the second cyclone to form in the North Indian Ocean during the Autumn transition season, developed into the most intense of all 1984 North Indian Ocean Storms. The storm was responsible for at least 430 deaths and has been called the worst tropical cyclone to affect the central east coast of India in 15 years.

The disturbance that would eventually develop into Tropical Cyclone 03B, was first noticed late on 5 November as a broad area of poorly organized convection west of Sumatra. Over the next few days the disturbance moved northwest. Although the system showed periodic convective flare-ups, there was no permanent significant increase in organization until 9 November. By then a well-defined low-level circulation center was visible on satellite imagery. During the 9th and into the 10th, the disturbance moved to the west-northwest with only slow development noted. At that time it was thought the disturbance might make landfall over the southeast coast of India before

developing into a significant tropical cyclone. However, that was not to be the case.

Late on the 10th, analysis of satellite imagery indicated that the overall convection and organization of the disturbance was increasing. Since Dvorak intensity analysis already indicated that 30 kt (15 m/s) winds were present, a TCFA was issued at 110330Z.

Less than four hours later, JTWC received a Dvorak intensity analysis from the Air Force Global Weather Central (AFGWC) which indicated the disturbance had intensified rapidly and now supported winds of 55 kt (28 m/s)! The first warning on Tropical Cyclone 03B was issued at 111200Z.

Figure 3-33-1 is a streamline analysis of the mid-level flow that was present throughout much of the warning phase of the storm's lifetime. The dominant features are the ridging across the Bay of Bengal and the associated neutral point over the east coast of India.

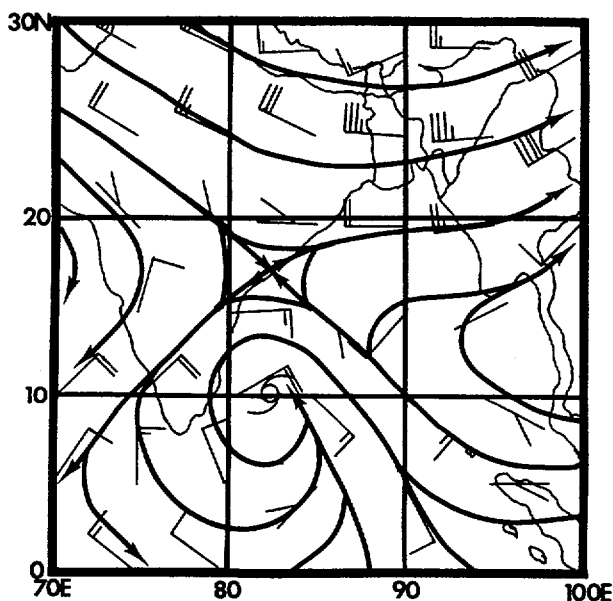


Figure 3-33-1. The mid-level flow present during much of Tropical Cyclone 03B's lifetime. Streamline analysis performed on the 111200Z November 500 mb NOGAPS wind field.

Since Tropical Cyclone 03B was firmly embedded in the southeasterly flow south of the ridge axis, the initial forecasts called for continued west-northwest movement, with dissipation over India within 36 hours. However, Tropical Cyclone 03B was to take a different course. Responding to the flow around the periphery of the ridge, the storm curved to the north and moved into the neutral point, lost all steering, and began an erratic movement. It took at least one clockwise loop (and perhaps a second) before

finally drifting slowly to the northwest towards India.

As the storm moved north on the 12th, it deepened rapidly attaining a peak intensity of 85 kt (44 m/s) at 121800Z. During this development stage, the system was vertically aligned with the upper-level anticyclone. From early on the 12th until the 14th, a 6 to 15 nm (11 to 28 km) wide eye was observed on satellite imagery (Figure 3-33-2).

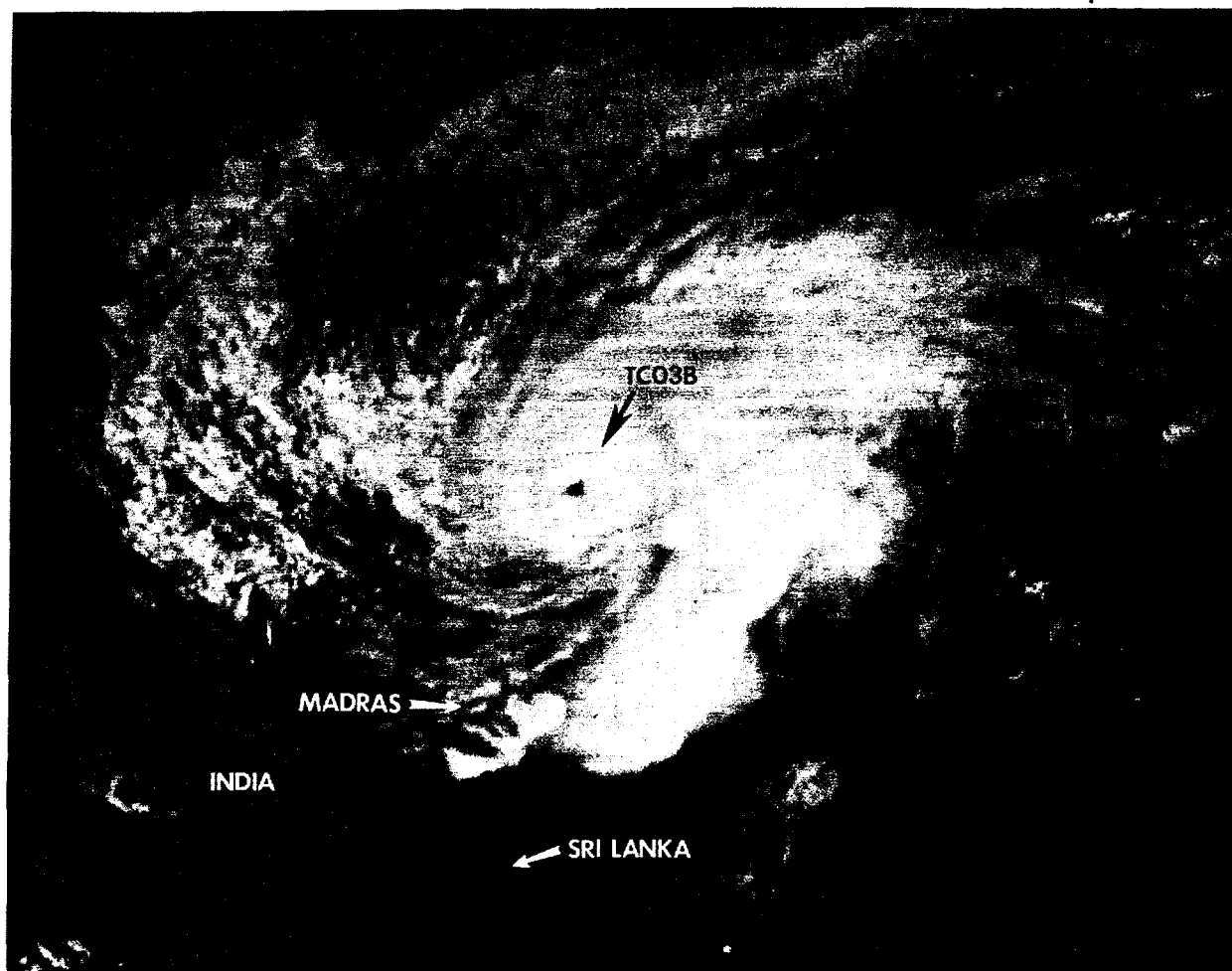


Figure 3-33-2. Tropical Cyclone 03B near maximum intensity (130427Z November DMSP visual imagery).

On 14 November, strong upper-level southwesterlies began to exert pressure on the storm. As a result, the convection began to be displaced to the northeast. Gradual weakening followed under this shearing environment until the storm made landfall where final dissipation occurred.

Unfortunately, the erratic movement and intensification of Tropical Cyclone 03B occurred very close to the east coast of

India and brought a prolonged period of heavy rain and flooding to much of the region. At least 430 are known dead as a result of the storm. Over 20,000 people were stranded in coastal villages due to flooding.

At 150600Z the last warning was issued as the nearly convection-free low-level center dissipated over land just south of Nellore (WMO 43245).